

BE AWARE FOR GOODNESS SAKE!

I am aware of how messed up our world is in many ways. I have written numerous articles in the *Alternative Voice* and other publications about the complex problems of our planet. But in those same articles I have included hope for opportunities to solve problems and change things for the better because I am at heart an optimist—a realistic optimist who appreciates the practical application of scientific, philosophical, and spiritual facts and ideals in day-to-day life.

Why am I such an optimist when I am so aware of evil (yes, I dare to use the e word)? Because I am also aware of the presence and power of goodness—goodness residing deep within individual persons and goodness in various groups aimed at improving some aspect of civilization.

In fact, I believe that there is a pattern of goodness present on our planet, a reservoir of potential goodness for us humans to pull from.

I think that a divine pattern is present in the particles of space as well as in the particles on this world, a pattern that can partially be seen through telescopes and microscopes. And this divine pattern—cosmic and earthly, huge and humble—is always good and beautiful. (Yeah, yeah, this is getting to sound a little too metaphysical. But hang in there. I think this is important for you to explore a bit.)

Evil is anything outside of that divine pattern, anything that deviates from the pattern's truth, beauty, and goodness. There are degrees of evil just as there are gradations of perfection and love within divine pattern. There are billions of ways to manifest the reality of divine pattern—materially, mindally, and spiritually. There are ways to relate to each other and to our natural world that are of goodness, and there are ways of relating to persons and the planet that are evil.

Let's talk about the daily practice of goodness. I live by the philosophy of always returning good for evil—something Jesus taught as well as other great spiritual



BY NIÁNN EMERSON CHASE

teachers who lived before and after him, Lao-Tse probably being the earliest proponent of this doctrine. Now, it is not always easy to return good for evil, but it is exciting to try to every moment of my day. Yet how can I, or you, return good for evil if we do not know the difference?

It is indeed true that we freewill human beings choose between good and evil almost every moment, between divine pattern and some distortion of it. Or we at least choose between a lower and higher way or try to determine the lesser of two evils or the better of two goods. More often than not, most people choose unconsciously and reactively rather than being fully conscious of the choice they are making—whether in matters that may seem miniscule or something of more substance.

So, mindful living, responsible living is being able (to the best of our ability) to discriminate between what is good and what is not so good or downright evil.

In order to return good for evil, we must BE AWARE of the presence of evil in ourselves, in others, and in the systems, policies, and practices of the dominant culture that rule the world through multi-national corporations that determine governmental, economic, and societal values. We need to become aware that the practice of evil results in very unhealthy earthlings and a very unhealthy earth.

Besides causing planetary confusion, evil results in universe disharmony. Yes, that is getting cosmic, but we do need to BE AWARE that we are not just planetary citizens, we are indeed citizens of a universe and that decisions to do good or evil do have a ripple effect in the universes of time and space.

In studying the tomes of spiritually-oriented tenets (especially *The URANTIA Book*), I discovered that goodness is always related to divinity—God/the Creator/the Universal Father. We must BE AWARE of that link to God (or whatever name you want to give to the First Source and Center) that we each have, that



fragment of the divine that is within each of us, for it is this divine link in us that holds the potential for practicing goodness.

Goodness is also part of living spiritual forces whose source (either directly or indirectly) is the Trinity. We must also BE AWARE of these living spiritual forces of circuitry and unseen beings—the angels and other personalities of other dimensions—who are present to assist us in understanding the difference between goodness and evil and to encourage us to do good. (There I go again, getting metaphysical on you.)

Coming back to Earth, we need to BE AWARE of what is truly good, what truly brings well-being to the mortal inhabitants of this world as well as to the fauna, flora, and ecosystems of the planet. Thus we need to become aware of those organizations and individuals who practice good, who deny their lower selves, their selfish egos to do something for the benefit of others. And we need to join them in their practices of returning good for evil, or at least support them in some manner.

We need to BE AWARE that goodness far outweighs evil in potency. From a perspective of eternal value, evil is considered an illusion, a nonreality that is temporary and does eventually dissolve and no longer "is." Goodness is real, not an illusion, and continues in some manifestation forever. "No act of good is ever wholly lost; it may be long thwarted but never wholly annulled, and it is eternally potent in proportion to the divinity of its motivation."¹

We need to BE AWARE that greatness and goodness are considered almost synonymous, and as a person seeks to practice goodness, he or she is also becoming great.

Of course love is associated with goodness, and we need to BE AWARE that love, in simple terms, is the desire to do good to others.

We need to BE AWARE that the practice of goodness is also related to health, family, spirituality, courage, and happiness.

BE AWARE that doing good is considered virtuous, and "in the day to day life of mortals, virtue is realized by the consistent choosing of good rather than evil."²

We need to BE AWARE that the "good effort of each person benefits all persons; the error or evil of each individual augments the tribulation of all individuals. As moves the part, so moves the whole. As the progress

of the whole, so the progress of the part."³ In other words, our decisions to respond in either goodness or evil effects others, and we need to BE AWARE that we are all interdependent upon each other and the earth we live upon with its ecosystems and atmosphere. Whatever we do to ourselves, to each other, and to the earth impacts the entire world as well as the heavens above us.

There is a teaching that Jesus gave on good and evil that is found in *The URANTIA Book*. In that particular teaching, Jesus points out that an "experience is good when it heightens the appreciation of beauty, augments the moral will, enhances the discernment of truth, enlarges the capacity to love and serve one's fellows, exalts the spiritual ideas, and unifies the supreme human motives of time" with the plans of God.⁴ Doesn't that sound wonderful and resonate deep within you, in your innermost being?

I believe that we each can attain a goodness that will bring peace, health, and happiness to ourselves as well as to those in our circle of influence.

We just have to become aware of the potentialities that are within our grasp and the supreme help that is within us.

The BE AWARE Festivals and Concerts are designed to inspire people to become more aware of our precious planet's problems and the potential for us to begin to create solutions to those problems and bring about great change for the benefit of the whole. At these festivals we celebrate life through the arts, loving social interaction, intelligence, and activism. Fun, hope, joy, compassion, and service to humankind are encouraged.

In this issue of the *Alternative Voice* are three articles by staff writers that focus on certain aspects of our planet's problems. Layola writes of the general dilemma of living in these times. Lah-May sheds light on the very unhealthy corporate control of our foods, and Blue Evening Star focuses on the importance of conserving our precious water resources.

So . . . read on and dance on.

Niánn Emerson Chase, a descendent of Ralph Waldo Emerson, is co-founder of Global Community Communications Alliance, and is a spiritual leader, teacher, counselor, and writer.

1 *The URANTIA Book*, p. 552

2 *Ibid.*, p. 193

3 *Ibid.*, p. 138

4 *Ibid.*, p. 1458